



Independent Certification of Health and Safety  
Management Systems for the Construction Industry

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# SAFE-T-CERT SCHEME GUIDE

## The Construction Sector Health and Safety Management Certification Scheme



**CEF** CONSTRUCTION  
EMPLOYERS  
FEDERATION



SAFETY  
SCHEMES IN  
PROCUREMENT

Contractors Registration Qualifications Limited trading as Safe-T-Cert  
Registered No.316675 Registered Office: Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

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## OVERVIEW OF SCHEME;

### Introduction

**Safe-T-Cert** is a certification scheme designed for certifying the Safety Management Systems of contractors working in the construction industry. The Scheme's objective is to improve health and safety management by providing objective standards and certifying those contractors whose safety management systems have been assessed, and can demonstrate that they;

- Meet the basic requirements for training and competence
- Implement an occupational health and safety management system which meets the requirements of Safe-T-Cert standard – incorporating continual improvement.
- Address relevant national legislation

### Key features of the Scheme

**Safe-T-Cert** is a construction sector specific safety management system standard.

The **Scheme** is applicable to contractors of all sizes.

**The Scheme** was developed jointly by the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) in Dublin and the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) in Belfast and was launched in October 2000 and is applicable in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

**Safe-T-Cert** certification is based on the International Labour Office (ILO) "Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems – [www.safe-t-cert.ie](http://www.safe-t-cert.ie) for guidance.

**Safe-T-Cert** is a recognised in the Republic of Ireland by the Government Construction Contracts Committee (GCCC) as meeting the health and safety suitability requirements for public procurement purposes. Also, Safe-T-Cert is a recognised system under the "Build Safe" initiative in Northern Ireland. It is also supported by the Construction Safety Partnership in the Republic of Ireland – see [www.csponline.ie](http://www.csponline.ie). It is also included under the guidelines for Competency Assessment of Contractors in the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) guidelines to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006.

**Safe-T-Cert** is accredited by Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) Forum in the UK.

### The Benefits of Safe-T-Cert Certification

Certification under the Scheme is a unique selling point for contractors to clients and others to indicate a professional approach to the health and safety management function and is thus a potential differentiator.

The Scheme satisfies the health and safety suitability requirements for contractor organisations for public procurement in the Republic of Ireland and removes the requirement to provide additional information.

The Scheme satisfies the “Build safe” requirements for contractor organisations, to operate a certified Safety Management System when tendering for publically funded work in Northern Ireland.

**Safe-T-Cert** is also approved by Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) Forum as a qualifying scheme. This exponentially increases the recognition of **Safe-T-Cert** amongst clients in Great Britain. SSIP is a group of health and safety pre-qualification schemes in Great Britain which has formalised mutual recognition across the schemes. SSIP qualifying schemes must demonstrate that they assess health and safety competence in line with the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. SSIP is actively supported by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). **Safe-T-Cert** exceeds many of the requirements of SSIP and involves a more rigorous assessment of health and safety management than most of the other recognised schemes. It is the only scheme supported by IOSH.

- Certification demonstrates real commitment to health and safety risk management.
- Certification demonstrates commitment to the well-being of the workforce.
- **Safe-T-Cert** certification provides contractors with third party recognition which can be submitted for pre-qualification and selection procedures.
- Certified contractors are listed on the Safe-T-Cert and SSIP register which is available to public and private sector clients.
- Certification promotes reductions in liability insurance premiums.

## **Certification**

In order to achieve certification companies must demonstrate that they have a robust health and safety management system in place (following the philosophy of the ILO Guidelines to Safety Management Systems ([see www.safe-t-cert.ie](http://www.safe-t-cert.ie) for guidance))

A Joint Standards Advisory Panel (JSAP) consisting of Client representatives, Professional bodies, the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI), Trade Unions and contractors advise on the standards for certification.

Companies that have gone through a detailed certification audit process and have met the minimum criteria will receive certification.

Companies can use **Safe-T-Cert** certification to demonstrate to clients and others that they have effective safety health and management systems and procedures.

## Independent Audit

Audits are carried out by **Safe-T-Cert** approved Auditors from a panel of Auditors overseen by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

Auditors must:

1. Have appropriate construction experience
2. Hold Chartered membership of IOSH.
3. Be an IRCA Registered Lead Auditor (International Register of Certified Auditors)
4. Have completed **Safe-T-Cert** Auditor Training and attend regular updates as required by **Safe-T-Cert** and IOSH.

The audit itself entails a detailed examination of the company's safety and health documentation and procedures together with interviews and site inspections.

## THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

### STAGE 1 - APPLICATION to Scheme

1. The Contractor requests / downloads a Safe-T-Cert application for registration form from Safe-T-Cert ([www.safe-t-cert.ie](http://www.safe-t-cert.ie))
2. The applicant company submits completed application form including the appropriate registration fee and verification of turnover (previous full financial year).
3. The Scheme registers the applicant company - The Company is now a “**Registered Applicant**”
4. The Scheme issues the Registered Applicant with details of registration.
5. The Registered Applicant company is listed on the Safe-T-Cert website.

Note: Once a company becomes a Registered Applicant the rules of the Scheme require them to proceed to full certification within **nine months** of registration. Failure to do so may result in the company's registration with Safe-T-Cert being suspended.

To assist Registered Applicants to prepare for audit they may seek basic advice from the Scheme Manager. Should further assistance or a pre assessment audit be required a list of independent Health and Safety Practitioners, familiar with the Safe-T-Cert scheme, can be provided.

**Safe-T-Cert requires that the Safety Management System be in place for at least 3 months prior to certification audit taking place.**

### STAGE 2 - AUDIT

Before applying for audit the contractor should ensure that its health and safety management systems are ready for audit. The Registered Applicant completes and submits the Audit Application Form and appropriate fee ([see www.safe-t-cert.ie](http://www.safe-t-cert.ie)) to the Scheme Manager.

On receipt of the application for audit and appropriate fee, the Scheme Manager appoints an Auditor. Confirmation of the Auditor appointment is sent to the Applicant company.

The Auditor contacts the company to arrange a suitable date to conduct the Safe-T-Cert audit.

#### Scope of the Audit

The Audit Application Form should clearly state the contractor's construction activities to be audited (see Appendix 2). The implementation of the safety management system must be consistent across all the construction activities to be audited.

The standard list of activities is included on the Audit Application Form. Activities defined by the local market sector / not included on the standard list, may also be acceptable subject to approval by the Scheme Manager (e.g. Public Sector Housing Response Maintenance).

The Safe-T-Cert audit is conducted in three stages:

1. A Documentation Audit
2. Site Audits
3. Senior Management Interviews

## **1. Documentation Audit**

Each audit commences with an opening meeting with the Registered Applicant's senior management, at which the Auditor explains the purpose, scope and standard being applied to the audit.

The Registered Applicant must make the relevant documentation as specified in the scheme rules (see Typical Documentation Requirements: Appendix 1), available for review by the Auditor

The Auditor will check to ensure that all necessary documentation is available. The Auditor assesses the Registered Applicant's documentation against the requirements of the scheme.

If the Auditor identifies shortfalls in the documentation, indicating a failure to meet the scheme or statutory requirements, the audit may be suspended at this stage.

If the Auditor suspends the audit and requests outstanding or additional documentation, then the time taken to review these items will be chargeable to the Registered Applicant Company.

When the Auditor is satisfied with the Registered Applicant's documentation he (or she) will agree the remaining audit arrangements and confirm these with the company.

A further element to the documentation audit requires the Auditor to identify documentary evidence that the Company has been operating its management arrangements throughout the period since the last audit or for at least 3 months in advance of the initial audit. The Company should make available documents from completed projects during the auditable period to confirm that its systems have been followed.

## **2. Site Visits / Audit**

The Auditor nominates a representative number of operational sites for a visit during the Audit as per the list supplied with the Audit Application. During the site visit(s), the Auditor examines objectively, evidence to confirm the functioning of the company's health and safety management system as outlined in the documentation. This is achieved by observations, interviews and the examination of records.

Before the closing meeting, the Auditor reviews any matters arising from the audit. The Auditor ensures that all aspects of the management system have been considered.

## **3. Management Interviews**

The Registered Applicant must ensure that the Principal Officer / Managing Director / Director with responsibility for health and safety, is available during the audit, along with appropriate safety management personnel.

During the interviews, the Auditor seeks to ascertain the levels of commitment from management to health and safety and continuous improvement in the function throughout the company.

The Auditor gives an overview of the results of the audit and shall ensure that each point, including perceived non compliances, are clearly explained.

No issue shall be raised subsequently in the audit report that has not been discussed with the company at the closing meeting.

The Auditor shall inform the company of his/her recommendation regarding certification under the scheme.

The Auditor makes one of three recommendations, as follows:

- (i) Approved for Immediate certification.**
- (ii) The postponement of certification subject to the rectification of limited non-compliance.**
- (iii) Not approved, if in the opinion of the Auditor the company has failed to meet the standards of the Scheme.**

If the result of the audit is either (ii) or (iii) above, the Auditor informs the company of its right of appeal.



All of the Registered Applicant's documentation is returned by the Auditor.

The Auditor, completes an audit summary report form, reviews his findings with the company and agrees on appropriate corrective action to any non-compliance.

### **Post Audit Action**

As soon as practical following completion of the audit, the Auditor forwards the completed documentation together with his (or her) recommendations to the Scheme Manager.

The audit report forwarded to the Scheme Manager normally consists of:

- 1 The audit analysis.
- 2 Audit summary and recommendations.
- 3 Any other supporting documentation.

If certification is approved, the Scheme Manager issues the Applicant Company with a Safe-T-Cert certificate, their certification number together with a copy of the Auditor's Report. (This is presuming all invoices have been paid)

If certification is not approved, the Scheme Manager issues the company with a copy of the Auditor's Report (on payment of the invoice for the costs of the audit).

### **STAGE 3 - ANNUAL VERIFICATION AUDITS**

Successful contractors are subject to an Annual Verification Audit (AVA) for each of the two subsequent years following initial certification.

The Scheme Manager contacts the certified company at an appropriate time to advise them that an AVA is due (10 weeks prior to certification expiry). It is the certified company's responsibility to complete an audit application form and to ensure that it is ready to undergo the AVA.

At the Annual Verification Audit, an Auditor appointed by the Scheme Manager, will look for evidence that the health and safety management standards of the company that resulted in initial certification have been maintained and that the suggested improvements notified to the company at the previous audit have been actioned.

After three years of continuous certification, the certified company is required to undergo a full audit process again (as described above).

## Fees

The professional fees for **Safe-T-Cert** certification are based on the verified turnover of an Applicant company. Full fee structure is available in Appendix 5 and online at [www.safe-t-cert.ie](http://www.safe-t-cert.ie).

The audit fee is payable in full 10 days prior to the audit date. If an audit is cancelled within 10 working days of the agreed date, a cancellation fee may be chargeable.

If a return visit is required an additional fee is chargeable,

## Conditions attached to use of the Safe-T-Cert certificate and Safe-T-Cert logo



Certified Contractors who have been awarded certification under the Scheme are entitled to use the Safe-T-Cert Certificate and the Safe-T-Cert logo. The logo may be used on the Contractor's premises, documentation, advertisements, vehicles and sites which are engaged solely in the activities within the scope of the Safe-T-Cert audit.

Use of the logo and certificate are also restricted to contractors who hold current certification – i.e. have been audited in the last year.

Registered Applicants **may not** make use of the logo.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Scheme has an appropriate complaints procedure.

- 1 The firm contacts the Scheme Manager in writing outlining the complaint
- 2 On receipt of this correspondence the Scheme Manager shall acknowledge and send a holding letter within 24 hrs of receipt of the complaint.

The Scheme Manager shall conduct a full investigation of the complaint within 7 days and a full response will be sent to the complainant. If the investigation is not complete within 7 days the Scheme Manager will write to the complainant summarising what steps will be taken and when they should expect to receive a full response

## APPEALS PROCEDURE

The Scheme has an appropriate appeals procedure.

- (a) To start the Appeals Procedure the firm must contact the Scheme Manager within 14 days of the date of communication of the decision.
- (b) On receipt of this correspondence the Scheme Manager shall send an acknowledgement letter to the appellant within 7 working days of receipt.
- (c) The Scheme Manager shall inform the Procedural Committee within 7 working days of receipt. The Procedural Committee will appoint an independent chairman for the Appeals Tribunal and request two members of JSAP to sit on the Appeals Tribunal.
- (d) The Appeals Tribunal will convene within 30 working days of the appeal being lodged.
- (e) The Appeals Tribunal will consider the appeal, interviewing relevant parties as necessary.
- (f) Relevant parties will be contacted 5 working days before a hearing.
- (g) The Appeals Tribunal will forward its written findings to the Scheme Manager within 45 working days of the appeal being lodged.
- (h) The Scheme Manager will inform the appellant of the adjudication of the Appeals Tribunal within 15 working days of the receipt of the Appeals Tribunal's findings.
- (i) The decision of the Appeals Tribunal will be final.
- (j) The members of the Appeals Tribunal are not liable for any consequences their decision may have for the Appellant.
- (k) If an appeal is rejected, the full costs of the appeal investigation will be borne by the contractor.

### Suspension and revocation

In the event of breach of the Scheme rules, Safe-T-Cert is entitled to suspend, revoke certification at any time during the certification period.

### Information

For further information, please contact;

Dermot Carey	
Safe-T-Cert	Phone: 01 406 6000
Construction House	Fax: 01 496 6953
Canal Road	e-mail: <a href="mailto:safetcert@cif.ie">safetcert@cif.ie</a>
Dublin 6	website: <a href="http://www.safe-t-cert.ie">www.safe-t-cert.ie</a>

## TYPICAL DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND RECORDS REQUIRED BY Safe-T-Cert

**This list is divided in two sections – Parts 1- 15 applies to all Applicant companies.**

**Parts 1 – 17 apply to Applicants with a turnover of greater that €19m per annum.**

- 1 Safe-T-Cert “Application for Audit” Form. Contact CIF at 01-4066057 or email: [safetcert@cif.ie](mailto:safetcert@cif.ie) or download from [www.safe-t-cert.ie](http://www.safe-t-cert.ie).
- 2 Company Employer / Public Liability Insurance Certificate.
- 3 Your company organisational structure listing key personnel, duties and responsibility for the management of health and safety.
- 4 Your company Health and Safety Statement, which should include your site rules and emergency procedures.
- 5 Details of staff qualifications - this should include:
  - (a) Safety awareness (Safe Pass or equivalent) and specific skills training e.g. FAS CSCS training of personnel. Contact FAS for a list of approved training providers.
  - (b) Senior and Middle Management training - e.g. CIF Managing Safely in Construction course Contact CIF, telephone 01-4066000 or website: [www.cif.ie](http://www.cif.ie)
  - (c) Company inductions including topic schedule copy of sample attendance record.
  - (d) Tool box talks records.
- 6 Your company risk assessment procedure to include - site work, workshop and stores as appropriate – this should outline details of general risk assessment and site specific assessments. Samples completed and dated.
- 7 Your company safety competence assessment procedure for sub contractors.

8 Sample Construction Stage Health and Safety Plans containing the methodology for completing a project.

9 Your company procedure for the recording relevant statutory inspections – e.g.:

- (a) Inspection of excavations
- (b) Scaffold erection and weekly inspection
- (c) Lifting appliances / plant
- (d) Any other relevant records

These records must also be available on site.

10 Details of the company's personal protective equipment policy and sample records of issue

11 Your company noise assessment procedure in accordance with the appropriate regulations.

12 Chemical risk assessments including record of manufacturer's data sheets. Regular recording and reviewing of assessments.

13 Your company procedure for general plant maintenance including the operator's checklist and maintenance records/charts.

14 Your company procedure for portable appliance tests including confirmation and copies of earthing test records.

15 General Records

(a) Site safety inspections and site safety audits including safety inspection checklists and audit report forms.

(b) Regular management meetings including reviews of projects, accidents, audits and objectives,. Copies of minutes / notes signed and dated.

(c) Annual review meetings including reviewing accident statistics, objectives. Copies of the minutes and action plan.

(d) Accident handling/reporting procedure. Accident book detailing reports to HSA of three days accidents and Dangerous Occurrences . Also reports of company/insurance investigations or reports outlining improvements arising from accident reviews.

(e) Details of any enforcement actions taken by the Health and Safety Authority – e.g. Improvement or Prohibition notices, Agreed closures / Prohibition orders or prosecutions.

(f) Your company long term/annual safety objectives / targets.

**The following documents, forms and records may be required for those Contractors with a turnover greater than €19 m per annum**

16 Detailed written procedures for health and safety to include:

(i) Company health and safety manual

(ii) Company employee handbook

17 Supply chain documentation – this must describe the procedures to ascertain whether materials / services supplied comply with standards or statutory regulation.

## Appendix 2

### Safe-T-Cert – List of Construction Activities:

This list is based on the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) of the Commission of the European Communities. Should the contents below not reflect your activity, please outline this activity on the application form. Please beware that certification issued will reflect the activities that the Auditor has audited.

1. General Construction – Building
2. General construction – Civil engineering / infrastructure
3. Electrical & communications installation
4. Mechanical installation
5. Lift, escalator and passenger conveyor installation
6. Earthworks
7. Drainage
8. Demolition
9. Water treatment
10. Railway construction
11. Pavement construction – Blacktop
12. Tunnelling & underground construction
13. Marine & river construction
14. Piling and foundation work
15. Plumbing
16. Heating & cooling system installation
17. Ventilation & air conditioning installation
18. Thermal insulation
19. In situ concrete construction
20. Pre cast concrete construction
21. Masonry, brickwork and stonework
22. Steel erection
23. Steel fabrication
24. Roofing – slating & tiling
25. Waterproofing
26. Sheeting & cladding
27. Curtain walling
28. Tiling – walls and floors
29. Painting & decorating
30. Glazing
31. Rendering, plastering and dry walling
32. Ceiling installation
33. Floor covering
34. Framework carpentry & joinery
35. Joinery manufacture
36. Landscape, sports facilities and playground construction
37. Waste management

Safe-T-Cert – Fee Structure

January 2014

Appendix 4 - Fees

Registration Fees (€)

Company Turnover (€)	Application Fee (€)	Total (Inc. VAT @ 23%)
0 – 1.27 million	79.50	97.79
1.27 – 6.35 million	132.50	162.98
6.35 – 19.05 million	270.30	332.47
19.05 – 38.1 million	402.80	495.44
38.1 Million +	540.60	664.94

Audit / Certification Fees (€)

Company Turnover (€)	Audit Fee	Certificate Fee	Total (Excluding VAT)	Total (Including VAT)
0 – 1.27 million	600.00	63.50	663.50	816.10
1.27 – 6.35 million	890.00	63.50	953.50	1,172.80
6.35 – 19.05 million	1,250.00	63.50	1,313.50	1,615.60
19.05 – 38.1 million	2,100.00	63.50	2,163.50	2,661.10
38.1 Million +	2,400.00	63.50	2,463.50	3,030.10

Notes:

Vat is charged at the current rate (23%)

Safe-T-Cert reserves the right to revise these charges.

Auditors travelling expenses are charged to the audited company, at cost post audit and are additional to the fees outlined above.